



Your voice for healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans

July 2024

We're excited to announce the release of our **2024 Legislative Report & Scorecard**, highlighting key achievements during the 2024 legislative session and grading lawmakers based on their support for policies to promote healthier minds across the lifespan for all Coloradans amidst the state's persistent health crisis.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

- 41 times Mental Health Colorado staff testified in committee
- 34 times Brain Wave advocates testified in committee
- 51 advocates attended Legislative Education & Advocacy Day at the Capitol
- 54 advocates participated in the Suicide Prevention Advocacy Day
- 100 emails sent to legislators advocating for our agenda bills
- 16 media stories about our agenda bills

CLICK HERE to Access the 2024 Legislative Report & Scorecard

[\[https://www.mentalhealthcolorado.org/legislative-report-scorecard2024\]](https://www.mentalhealthcolorado.org/legislative-report-scorecard2024)

LEGISLATION WE OPPOSED

This year, Mental Health Colorado continued to defend against policies that entangle people who have unmet mental health needs and substance use conditions within the criminal and juvenile justice systems. We will continue to oppose policies that criminalize mental health and substance use conditions because our friends, family, and neighbors deserve #CareNotCuffs.

MENTAL HEALTH COLORADO

TAKE ACTION

DONATE **VOLUNTEER**

CONNECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

[@CO_MentalHealth](#) [/mentalhealthCO](#)

[@mentalhealthcolorado](#)

JOIN THE BRAIN WAVE

“Colorado is in the midst of a health crisis that demands immediate and sustained attention and action,” said Vincent Atchity, President & CEO. “This year, with the help of allies in the legislature and powerful grassroots advocates, we chipped away at major systemic barriers that have perpetuated this crisis and made key investments to support our most vulnerable community members. Thanks to our state lawmakers’ demonstrated commitment to mental health, particularly the 69 who received perfect scores on our scorecard this year, **we’re hopeful for a future where each Coloradan has the best chance for a happy, healthy life that human compassion and intelligence can support.**”

‘Know Your Rights’ Guide for Mental Health and Substance Use Services

Know Your Rights

Federal and state laws **require** health insurance carriers to cover mental health and substance use care in the same way they do for physical health conditions.

This is called parity.
It means that access to behavioral health services should be similar to/no more difficult to access than physical health services.



If you feel your patient rights have been violated, you can file a complaint.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ADMINISTRATION
 ● CDHS_BHA_complaint@state.co.us
 ● 303-866-7191

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL COLORADO
 ● 720-777-1010 for Denver Metro locations
 ● 719-305-1010 for Colorado Springs location

DEPARTMENT OF REGULATORY AGENCIES (DORA) DIVISION OF PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONS
 ● dora_dpo_licensing@state.co.us
 ● 303-894-7800

DEPARTMENT OF REGULATORY AGENCIES (DORA) COLORADO CIVIL RIGHTS DIVISION
 ● DORA_CCRDInvestigations@state.co.us
 ● 303-894-2997

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
 ● cdphe.hfdintake@state.co.us
 Subject line: [Relevant health care entity type], Complaint Intake
 ● See entity below

Ambulatory Surgical Center 303-692-2827	Assisted Living Residence 303-691-4045 1-800-886-7689, ext. 4045	Dialysis Center 303-692-2827	Home Care Agency and Hospice 303-692-2910 1-800-842-8826
Hospital 303-692-2827 1-800-886-7689, ext. 2827	Nursing Home 303-692-2442 1-800-886-7689, ext. 2442	Providers and facilities that serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities 303-692-2926, 1-800-886-7689, ext. 2926	



As new legal protections for patients seeking or receiving mental health and substance use care take effect, we've created a guide to help Coloradans familiarize themselves with their legal rights. **Within the guide, you will find important, situation-specific information about Coloradans' legal rights and what to expect while seeking or receiving care.** This includes rights for children and minors, legal parameters around involuntary mental health and substance use services, and information about mental health parity requirements that ensure behavioral health services are as accessible as physical health services. The guide also directs Coloradans to key resources for when their rights have been denied or violated.

[\[Click here to access the guide.\]](#)

“All Coloradans deserve to be treated with dignity and respect when accessing health care and services,” said Vincent Atchity, President and CEO of Mental Health Colorado. “Unfortunately, people experiencing mental health and substance use conditions don’t always know what to expect in care settings and sometimes experience discrimination, violations of their rights, and unjust barriers to care rather than getting the high-quality, compassionate care they need to heal. It’s critical to empower all Coloradans with an understanding of their legal rights so they can protect and advocate for themselves and their loved ones in all care settings.”

Compassion Over Incarceration: \$13 Million to Promote Alternatives to Jail



Photo courtesy of Breakthrough Alliance of Colorado

Caring for Denver Foundation approved 18 grants totaling more than \$13 million to community-based nonprofit organizations, including Mental Health Colorado for our SAFER Opportunities Initiative, in the Alternatives to Jail funding area.



an initiative of  **MENTAL HEALTH COLORADO**

“Each funded program addresses the complex needs of individuals involved in the legal system through a range of services, including mental health support, peer counseling, substance misuse treatment, trauma-informed care, culturally competent services, and comprehensive case management. The grantees provide essential resources to successfully divert individuals from the legal system and support their recovery by meeting them where they are in their journey. These initiatives aim to decrease recidivism and support a successful transition into the community.”

Want to support Mental Health Colorado?

[\[CLICK HERE\]](#)

41st Annual Tribute Fundraising Gala



[GET TICKETS]

Date: October 12, 2024

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Grand Hyatt Denver, 1750 Welton St, Denver, CO
Formal Attire

Join us for a night filled with art, live music, dancing, delicious food & drinks, and engaging activities! Each ticket purchased will directly fund our programs and initiatives to support the health and well-being of Coloradans across the lifespan.

Together, we will once again celebrate accomplishments and pay tribute to the dedication of individuals and organizations in our state who have made a meaningful impact on the health landscape in Colorado.

[Follow this link to secure your tickets now!](#)

If you have any questions or for sponsorship inquiries, please contact Ashley at aperales@mentalhealthcolorado.org.

In The News



Colorado Suicide, Mental Health Crisis Lifeline System Needs More Work *Kiowa County Press | 7/1/24 | Eric Galatas*

“Colorado is answering just 75 percent of 988 calls, and lacks critical resources including care providers, beds and other facilities.

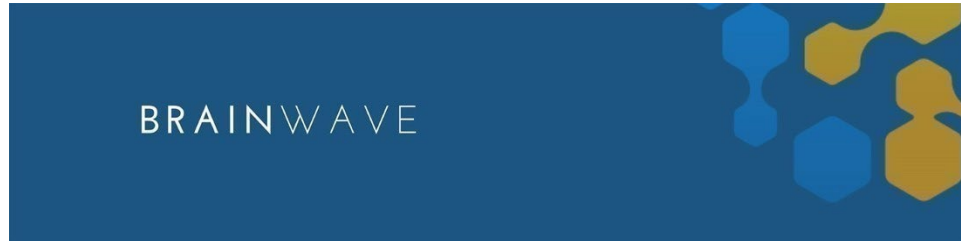
Vincent Atchity - CEO of Mental Health Colorado - said like many other states, Colorado is experiencing a workforce shortage... ‘It is difficult to create a system that has got a really high response rate, and a really high connectivity rate.’

Atchity said he encourages people to call 988 instead of 911 for mental health crises. He said if you're concerned about yourself or someone else, make the call, and a professional will evaluate the situation.

‘It’s far better to place a crisis call,’ said Atchity, ‘and have everything de-escalated successfully in no time at all over a call, than to hesitate and experience worse outcomes.’”

[Read More Here](#)

The Brain Wave Policy Corner



With the upcoming election, many people feel anxious about the uncertainty of the future. One empowering step is to register to vote. It gives us the agency to influence future outcomes and support candidates who align with our values and aspirations.



[Find information on how to register to vote HERE.](#)

A View from Washington, D.C.

Senate Passed Kids Online Safety and Privacy Act

Yesterday, July 30th, the Senate passed the Kids Online Safety and Privacy Act. This package includes KOSA and COPPA 2.0, aiming to protect children's online privacy and mental health. Thank you to all individuals and organizations who have worked over the past two years to help move this important bill forward to hold Big Tech accountable and address children's mental health upstream.

House Recess Until September

The House of Representatives started its August recess early and will remain until September 9th. The House has passed four out of twelve funding bills and was expected to pass more, including the Labor-HHS bill, but was unable to do so. The Labor-HHS bill that passed the Appropriations Committee

contains some helpful increases in funding to SAMHSA and HRSA but also includes several concerning cuts to CDC and K-12 education programs. Prior to their early recess this week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Health held a [hearing](#) to hear from leaders at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and to discuss CDC's priorities. A recording of the hearing can be viewed [here](#).

Task Force Report on Kids Online Safety

The Kids Online Health and Safety Task Force (led by SAMHSA and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration) [released](#) a [new report](#) this week with recommendations, best practices, and a research agenda for safer social media and online platform use for youth. The Task Force also committed to future actions, including providing more resources for children, teenagers, and families, guidance for pediatricians, and recommendations for conducting more research.

HUD Announces Supportive Housing Funding

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) [announced](#) \$175 million in first-of-its-kind funding opportunities for new construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation of permanent supportive housing. Through one-time awards under the Continuum of Care (CoC) program, the [CoCBuilds Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) will enable communities to develop new rental housing units with supportive services for people experiencing homelessness. Applications are due November 21, 2024.

CMS Guidance on Medicaid for Incarcerated Youth

CMS issued a [letter to State Health Officials](#) this week, addressing the statutory requirements in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (CAA, 2023) regarding the availability of certain state plan services for incarcerated youth in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and modification of CHIP eligibility requirements for children who become incarcerated. The letter also provides guidance on the requirement that states submit a state plan amendment (SPA) to implement the coverage with an effective date of no later than January 1, 2025.

Events

School Mental Health Community of Practice

School Mental Health Community of Practice

2024-25 School Year

Advancing School Mental Health in Colorado

Join us for the 2024–25 Community of Practice

The Community of Practice brings together school professionals and community members from all regions of Colorado to engage in shared learning, conversation, and collaboration as we advance school mental health best practices that are known to work in our local communities.

Session topics are informed by participant feedback and interest. Participants include school staff and leaders, mental health professionals, community members, and school mental health champions.



VIRTUAL CoP SESSIONS

Dedicated to enhanced learning, networking, and sharing of successes and challenges.

2nd Wednesday of the month

10:00–11:30am

September, October, November,
February, January, April, and May

[\[REGISTER HERE\]](#)

Pride in Public Health Summit



PRIDE IN PUBLIC HEALTH SUMMIT

Friday, October 4th • 8am-5pm

University of Colorado Anschutz Campus
Health Sciences Building
1890 N Revere Ct, Aurora, CO

Please save the date for the first ever
Pride in Public Health Summit on October 4th!

In partnership with the Colorado School of Public Health, Envision: You will be co-hosting this one-day event bringing together educators, students, activists, providers, advocates, community leaders, and many more to **explore the intersections of the LGBTQ+ community and public health, mental health, and wellness**. Click through to register for the Summit (only \$30!), become a sponsor, or submit an abstract for presentation opportunities!

[Click here!](#)

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Every time you shop at King Soopers, a portion of your purchase can benefit Mental Health Colorado.